

P-427, 520, 407, 426, 421, 430, 405/CP-93-160 ORDER GRANTING TIME
EXTENSION AND REQUIRING FILING OF LOWER COST ALTERNATIVE

BEFORE THE MINNESOTA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

Don Storm
Tom Burton
Marshall Johnson
Cynthia A. Kitlinski
Dee Knaak

Chair
Commissioner
Commissioner
Commissioner
Commissioner

In the Matter of the Petition
for Extended Area Service From
the Big Lake Exchange to the
Minneapolis/St. Paul
Metropolitan Calling Area

ISSUE DATE: November 29, 1993

DOCKET NO. P-427, 520, 407, 426,
421, 430, 405/CP-93-160

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PROCEDURAL HISTORY

On March 4, 1993, customers in the Big Lake exchange of Sherburne County Rural Telephone Company (SCRTC) filed a petition requesting EAS to the Minneapolis/St. Paul metropolitan calling area (MCA).

By letter dated March 10, 1993, the Department of Public Service (the Department) requested traffic information from SCRTC.

On March 30, 1993, SCRTC filed the requested traffic data with the Commission.

On May 11, 1993, the Commission issued its ORDER SCHEDULING THE FILING OF COST STUDIES AND PROPOSED RATES. In that Order, the Commission found that Big Lake met the adjacency and traffic criteria of Minn. Stat. § 237.161, subd. 1(a) (1992). The Commission delayed the filing of cost studies and proposed rates, however, pending resolution of disputed cost study issues in the Zimmerman EAS docket, Docket No. P-427, 421/CP-85-652.

On September 21, 1993, the Commission issued its ORDER ADOPTING RATES FOR POLLING in the Zimmerman EAS docket, resolving the cost study issues relevant to the current docket.

On October 21, 1993, SCRTC filed a request for an extension of time for filing its cost study and proposed rates in this matter. The Company also requested that the Commission direct the interexchange carriers (IXCs) carrying traffic between Big Lake and the metropolitan calling area (MCA) to file two-way traffic data that SCRTC needed to prepare its cost studies.

On October 21, 1993, GTE Minnesota (GTE) filed a request for an extension of 45 days from the date the IXCs' traffic data is filed to submit its cost studies and proposed rates for this route.

On November 23, 1993, the Commission met to consider this matter.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Background: Cost Methodology Problems Resolved

In the May 11, 1993 Order, the Commission found that certain cost study methodology questions should be resolved in the Zimmerman EAS case before cost studies and proposed rates would be due in this matter. Once the methodology was set, however, cost studies and proposed rates would be due within 60 days.

The cost study methodology issues in question were resolved on September 21, 1993 when the Commission issued its ORDER ADOPTING RATES FOR POLLING in the Zimmerman matter. Accordingly, cost studies and proposed rates in this matter were due November 22, 1993.

Additional Time Needed; Order to IXCs Unnecessary

SCRTC asserted that another obstacle to receipt of those cost studies and proposed rates has arisen. SCRTC argued that data regarding IXC traffic needed for these cost studies and proposed rates has not been provided by the IXCs serving the proposed route. The missing data (data from the IXCs for which SCRTC does not perform the billing and collection function) represents approximately 35 percent of the traffic. SCRTC has requested additional time to obtain and incorporate this data into the cost studies and proposed rates.

Further, to assure its ability to complete the required cost studies and proposed rates, SCRTC has asked that the Commission order the IXCs serving the routes in question to provide this data promptly. Such a measure will not be necessary. SCRTC participates in centralized equal access (CEA) offered by the Minnesota Independent Equal Access Corporation (MIEAC). In all other pending EAS proceedings in which the local exchange companies (LECs) participate in MIEAC's CEA offering, the LECs have obtained the necessary IXC traffic data from MIEAC. SCRTC should do so also in this matter.

A 45 day extension from the date of this Order is reasonable to allow SCRTC to gather the missing data from MIEAC and file its cost study and proposed rates. To achieve equity and to coordinate the filings in this matter, the Commission will extend

the filing date for all the LECs involved.

Lower Cost Alternative

Minn. Stat. § 237.161, subd. 1 (c) (1992) states that the LEC serving an exchange seeking EAS to the MCA must make local measured service or another lower cost alternative to basic flat-rate service available to customers in the petitioning exchange. In all pending metro EAS cases, the Commission has required that the LEC serving the petitioning exchange file its proposed lower cost alternative with the cost studies and proposed rates. The Commission will so require in this case as well.

ORDER

1. The request of Sherburne County Rural Telephone Company (SCRTC) for a 45 day extension is granted.
2. Within 45 days of this Order, SCRTC, Eckles Telephone Company (Eckles), GTE Minnesota (GTE), Scott-Rice Telephone Company, United Telephone Company (United), US West Communications, Inc. (USWC), and Vista Telephone Company (Vista) shall file their cost studies and proposed rates.
3. At the same time that it files its cost study and proposed rates, SCRTC shall file a proposed lower cost alternative to basic flat rate service as required by Minn. Stat. § 237.161, subd. 1 (c) (1992).
4. Within 45 days of the filings pursuant to Ordering Paragraphs 2 and 3, the Minnesota Department of Public Service (the Department) shall file its report and recommendations thereon.
5. Parties shall have 20 days to comment after the Department files its report and recommendations.
6. This Order shall become effective immediately.

BY ORDER OF THE COMMISSION

Susan Mackenzie
Acting Executive Secretary

(S E A L)